

Korean probe: 'odious, ugly'

WASHINGTON (AP) — Tong-sun Park reportedly began giving details of an alleged influence-buying operation to the House ethics committee Thursday and some members called it odious and ugly.

"We covered the most odious episode in the story today," Rep. Bruce Caputo, R-N.Y., told reporters.

"It was a conspiracy of American businessmen, congressmen and Koreans to make blatantly improper payments over a sustained period with U.S. taxpayers' money," he said.

She and Caputo refused, because of the committee's secrecy rules, to reveal any of Park's testimony but said he gave new details on payments already disclosed publicly.

Tumbling dollar gouges GIs

BONN, West Germany — Senior American commanders are urging German landlords to lower rents to help low-ranking GIs and their families survive the collapse of the dollar, and military families are chipping in with donations of food.

"It's never been this bad over here for our GIs," Army Maj. Boyd Burkholder said Thursday as the dollar was fixed on currency exchange markets at just over two marks, half its value a decade ago.

The Army, which promotes the advantages of a European assignment in its enlistment brochures, also is considering a proposal to allow wives and children of junior enlisted men to eat regularly in the mess halls to make sure they have an adequate diet.

In the last year, the dollar has plummeted from 2.6 marks to about two marks, and

some dealers predict it may drop to 1.9 marks by the end of the month.

The dollar's drop affects all 200,000 U.S. troops stationed in West Germany, but its impact is hardest on those who can least afford it — young soldiers in the bottom pay grades.

Under current regulations, those servicemen are not entitled to bring their families to West Germany at government expense and do not qualify for free housing. But an estimated 16,000 low-ranking GIs have brought their wives and children here at their own expense.

They must house them in German apartments and pay their rent in marks. Every time the dollar falls, their rent, electric and telephone bills go up, in many cases faster than their pay and allowances.

Like other soldiers, the low-ranking GIs

and their families are free to use American post exchanges and commissaries, where prices are quoted in dollars and are lower than in the United States.

Most of the 50,000 American civilians in West Germany, including businessmen, students, and journalists, have no such privileges and are not shielded against the dollar's fall.

For Germans, the annual inflation rate has been about 3.2 percent. But for Americans in Germany, the annual rate, accelerated by their currency's slide, has been close to 20 percent.

Gen. George Blanchard, commander of the U.S. Army in Europe, has proposed allowing GI dependents to eat in mess halls to reduce their financial hardship, paying a small fee to defray costs. The proposal has been referred to the Department of the Army in Washington, officials said.

World at a glance

From Associated Press Reports

Banking panel okays William

WASHINGTON (AP) — With only its chairman voting no, the Senate Banking Committee recommended Thursday the Senate confirm William Miller to head the Federal Reserve Board. Formal confirmation of the nomination of the 52-year-old board chairman of Textron Inc. to replace Arthur Burns as the nation's central banker is expected in the full Senate on Friday.

Cuban troops confirmed

Ethiopia confirmed for the first time Thursday that Cuban troops are manning front lines alongside Ethiopians in the African country's war against secessionist rebels. A rebel leader claimed Cuban paratroopers and women tank crew members have been dropped into the battle zone.

No etiquette classes planned

WASHINGTON — Pres. Carter has been host to White House conferences on children and youth, on the handicapped and on Balanced National Growth and Economic Development. But he says he is not planning a White House Conference on Etiquette in Singles Bars.

Carter was responding to a tongue-in-cheek question prompted by a recent incident in a singles bar involving his chief aide, Hamilton Jordan. The story, denied by the White House, was that Jordan spat his amaretto and cream drink at a woman after an argument.

Bill forces private sector to raise retirement age

WASHINGTON (AP) — House-Senate conferees agreed Thursday on a bill that would force private businesses to raise their mandatory retirement age from 65 to 70 and ban altogether the forced retirement of federal employees.

Under current law, the three million federal workers are subject to mandatory retirement at age 70. That rule would end after Sept.

30, under the new legislation.

Congressional leaders said final passage of the bill should come this month and Pres. Carter is expected to sign it quickly.

The provision under which private business could not force an employee into retirement before age 70 would go into effect next Jan. 1. The legislation grants up to two years for companies to phase out mandatory age 65 retirement

provisions in existing labor contracts.

The measure affects only private companies with 20 or more employees on the payroll. That covers about 70 percent of the labor force.

Currently, private sector workers are protected against age discrimination in hiring, job retention, pay and other work conditions only to age 65.

The proposed law does not change 65 as the age at which most people can begin collecting maximum Social Security benefits.

Conferees agreed to compromise on two controversial sections of the new legislation affecting highly paid business executives and college professors.

Colleges and universities would be allowed to continue the forced retirement at age 65 of high-level executives whose retirement benefits, minus Social Security, would amount to \$27,000 a year.

Senate panel back greater tax breaks

WASHINGTON (AP) — Congressional tax-writing committees indicated Thursday they will support even greater tax reductions this year than the \$32.6 billion recommended by Pres. Carter.

The Senate Finance Committee voted to recommend that the 1979 budget make room for a tax

cut of up to \$44 billion. The House Ways and Means Committee set a maximum reduction of \$35.2 billion.

Neither panel decided exactly how taxes should be cut. Both left open the possibility that some reduction in Social Security taxes will be made.

Probe reveals OLCC abuses

SALEM (AP) — A three-month investigation of the Oregon Liquor Control Commission (OLCC) revealed abuses of power and numerous efforts by officials to hamper the probe, Atty. Gen. Jim Redden said Thursday.

In a 43-page report to Gov. Bob Straub, Redden said the three-month investigation did not yield evidence of criminal violations or corruption in the OLCC.

But he said agency officials, including Administrator Kenneth Underdahl, have exceeded their authority and used "extra legal" methods to resolve

problems.

Straub said he would hold a news conference Friday to make recommendations to the three-member citizen commission that oversees the agency and hires the administrator.

The commission is appointed by the governor. Underdahl, who has been on vacation leave for several weeks during the probe, met with Straub after the report was issued.

Loren Kramer, Straub's executive assistant, said there would be no announcement about Underdahl's future before Friday.

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